

WAR COMMENTARY

For Anarchism

Vol. 6, No. 14,

5th MAY, 1945.

THREE ANARCHISTS JAILED

“This is a Political Trial”
declares Defending



OUR comrades, Vernon Richards, John Hewetson and Philip Sansom, were, on the 26th April, each sentenced to nine months' imprisonment for charges under the Defence Regulation No. 39A, of attempting to seduce from their duty members of H.M. Forces. Marie Louise Richards, known to readers of War Commentary as M. L. Berneri, who was accused of the same offence, was acquitted and discharged. A report of the trial, which lasted four days, is given below. From this it will be seen that the four comrades maintained their anarchist contentions throughout the trial.

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posed intention on their part. But surely tell with accuracy the intentions of any person, particularly when they have achieved a tangible result, demands an omniscience which no human being is capable.

Whatever the legal quibbles of the case, the fact remains that our comrades acted sincerely and conscientiously according to their beliefs, and that for so acting they are now sent to prison. Their actions arose from their beliefs, and therefore they are punished for their beliefs as well as for their actions, punished for holding the doctrines of anarchism which are so much feared by the authorities of this country. We regard it as unjust that our comrades should have been imprisoned but we regard it as a triumph that their action should have so far excited the terror of the government of this country that it feels compelled to institute proceedings of so odious kind.

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It has been said that these men were convicted on a criminal and not on a political charge. But their 'crime' was the expression of opinions which the authorities regarded as dangerous in a political manner, i.e. as likely to threaten the political structure of capitalist society. It has been said that this is a case of the breach of a government regulation, and not a case of the freedom of speech or writing. But the very government regulation itself is aimed at the restriction of freedom of speech. If a man is told that he must not say certain things to certain people, his freedom of speech is curtailed, and if he is imprisoned for saying such things to such people, then it is a case of the suppression of freedom of speech. Furthermore, the case for the prosecution, as well as the regulation itself, is based not on any achievement of the accused, but on a sup-

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This imprisonment of our comrades must be made the beginning of a great fight which all who are concerned for freedom must take their part if they are not to be submerged in turn. The powers in the hands of the authorities which have caused this series of attacks on Freedom Press during the recent months are a danger not only to anarchists, but also to all radical movements and individuals whose expression of opinions is likely to cause discomfort to the ruling class. The defence regulations are framed in such a way that almost any political statement can be interpreted by an imaginative lawyer as an offence against wartime law. It is time we secured the complete liberation of speech and writing from all the slavish restrictions under which they labour to-day, and this is something which will not come to us as a gift. We can only obtain it if we take strong and vigorous action.

We demand the release of our comrades who are imprisoned under this iniquitous law. We do not ask it as a favour, we demand it as a moral right, and we shall fight for it with every means at our disposal until we have won it. But we, and we can be sure that many others, can be said on behalf of the three anarchists



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careful of rhythm and metre, unless the modernist 'free verse' (unsuitable for singing of course) is adopted. In any case, carry on writing, poets: there may be an Erich Muehsam or a Lorca in your midst."

A FOUR DAYS' TRIAL

at the Old Bailey, April 23rd—26th

THE Attorney General began his opening speech for the prosecution by stating that the charges arose under Defence Regulation No. 39A, which states that "no person shall endeavour to seduce from their duty persons in His Majesty's service". He continued: "The persons in His Majesty's service whom we allege these accused endeavoured to seduce from their duty and among whom they endeavoured to cause disaffection likely to lead to breaches of their duty are persons in the Forces . . . The first charge is that all these four persons are charged with conspiring together to commit the offence, the nature of which I have just indicated to you . . . The first subsidiary charge is that they are all charged individually with an endeavour to cause disaffection."

The Attorney General stated that the main case for the prosecution was based on a circular letter, and three issues of *War Commentary*, for the 1st, 11th and 25th November, 1944. He went on to allege that the prosecution had nothing to do with the political views of the accused, and that they were being charged with breaking the criminal law.

"I shall submit to you," he said, "that the instrument which those responsible for this publication advocate is an armed revolution." He alleged that certain passages in *War Commentary* contained exhortations to soldiers "to organise themselves into councils in order to be ready for the armed revolution" and "when the time comes when they would ordinarily be demobilised and give up their arms to hold on to their arms." The Attorney General pointed to articles on Mutinies which occurred in the German and Russian armies at the end of the last war.

Writing History is No Offence

"Of course," he said, "writing history is no offence, and it is really a good thing that the history of that and of other events should be written, but I shall submit to you that the descriptions of those events in this paper are not put forward as matters of history but are put forward as examples of what our soldiers should do in this country when the time comes at the end of the war and when demobilisation or partial demobilisation may take place."

He went on to discuss the circular letter, of

which copies were alleged to have been found at No. 27 Belsize Road when Vernon and Marie Louise Richards were present, at John Hewetson's house and at Philip Sansom's studio.

The Circular Letter

"I propose to read the whole of this circular letter," he said. "There are particular passages in it to which I shall direct your attention, but sometimes if one picks out just a bit of a letter it may be that is unfair, and therefore I think it right to read the whole of this letter so that you shall get the passages on which the prosecution rely. It is headed at the top right hand side 'Freedom Press, 27 Belsize Road, London, N.W.6. 25th October, 1944. Dear Comrades. It is a long time since our last circular letter was sent out and since then many comrades have been sent abroad.' That in my submission shows pretty clearly that it is intended for members of the Forces, or in the main. 'On this account we naturally receive fewer letters than before, but we notice on the other hand an increased seriousness in all of them. Reflecting these present days and the future struggles ahead, your letters show a more thoughtful and anxious trend, and this we are pleased to see. We earnestly ask comrades remaining in this country to do their best to fill our depleted ranks by the introduction of new comrades. Once again we ask for more communications. A few of you, it is seen, write very regularly and often. Others, perhaps through increased duties, do not write so frequently. But always remember that anything of interest to the movement or to the general public will be gratefully received. Also, comrades who find time for serious reading should try to combine this with research work for the movement and send us quotations of all items of interest. Reports of meetings, strikes, etc., that are often to be found only in local newspapers, and are consequently overlooked, would be welcome too. Many questions have been sent in by younger comrades and newcomers who want to know how they can be helpful. We ask those who write to write and keep on writing, and to learn as much about the movement as possible. We will gladly supply comrades with pamphlets and back numbers of 'War Commentary' on application. One comrade writes: 'My brother in Oxford sends me 'War Commentary' regularly which I distribute to support those views I have always held.' As can be seen from letters quoted in the *Soldiers' Page* of the mid-October number, many comrades visit political meetings and exchange there our literature for the literature of the party holding the meeting. We of course do not favour dogmatism or narrow-mindedness and think that all comrades ought to read our opponents' publications and compare or contrast the opinions and theories propagated there with our own. By the way, don't keep 'W.C.' in your pocket or under your mattress when you have read it. First let your room mates see it and then contrive to lose it in some convenient spot. We suggest that comrades be more active in visiting discussion groups and lectures. These are often run in the army by the C.P. nowadays or under Army Education schemes. Soldiers generally do not think much of these groups and lectures, and we sympathetically agree. Distrust and dislike of them is often

justified and many have experienced what amounts to a kind of persecution after having spoken up at such meetings. On the other hand, some comrades already know the great value of well timed and apt questions which can frequently throw speakers into confusion and, though often remaining unanswered, can set long trains of thought in motion in the minds of the audience. Besides these legal discussion groups and compulsory lecture periods, another form of discussion is always developing in barrack rooms, tents and Nissen huts, especially now that winter is approaching. These unofficial discussions amongst soldiers are frequently of vital importance and play a far greater part in 'educating' the politically and socially 'unaware' than any A.B.C.A. lecture could ever hope to accomplish. Our comrades should whenever possible attend and take part in these discussions. In many cases we find comrades uniting with I.L.P. men and Trotskyists to exchange thoughts and literature during and after such meetings. Many other soldiers openly express views which are unconsciously anarchist. It is the task of our comrades to help and develop these potential comrades. Experience will have taught comrades that these discussions bring a sympathy and unity of feeling to barrack rooms which authority is always trying to split by every means such as promotions or postings. For solidarity frightens authority. You should therefore do everything possible to establish closer contacts and comrades who leave a unit should immediately send us names and addresses of all sympathisers in that unit so that we can send them our publication list.' Then this is an important paragraph: 'Such discussion groups mentioned above may form the basis for future Soldiers' Councils—capital 'C'—It is expected that an article will appear shortly in 'W.C.' on 'Soldiers' and Workers' Councils, and we hope to receive many criticisms and suggestions from you. One of the most important questions in our opinion is that of the action of Soldiers' Councils in a revolutionary situation. Whilst many comrades know the role played by such councils during and after the last war in Russia and Germany, it would seem that only a few know of their vital function and mission. In connection with discussion groups, comrades should undertake to send us reports of all meetings. This would help us to gain fuller knowledge of the views and criticisms of the soldiers who take part. Grievances reflected in discussions would when possible be made public. Comrades by the way who have problems to solve or are in difficulty over theoretical matters should send us short, to-the-point questions, which we should answer as speedily as possible. John Olday's cartoons, according to letters received from comrades, are being used instead of 'pin-up girls' on barrack room and hut walls and have proved most effective media for arousing discussions although often provoking interference from ignorant N.C.O.'s and officers, the freedom of speech and thought not being part of the army structure. In three units at least the showing of these cartoons has developed into a regular wall newspaper which comrades also fill with cuttings from 'W.C.'s' 'Through the Press' feature and with their own cuttings. We have received many poems which we shall keep and make use of sooner or later. Especially does the movement need marching songs and 'hymns'. When writing these and other poems comrades should be

Not Concerned With Accuracy

The Attorney General then turned to *War Commentary* for the 1st November, and the article headed "All Power to the Soviets." "I submit" he said, "it is quite plain that what has happened in the past is being put before the readers of this paper as a policy which is to be followed and the lessons of which are to be learned so as to see that it does not fail this time."

He next referred to *War Commentary* for the 11th November, and the article headed 'People in Arms.' "There are references to events in France and Belgium," he said. "We are not concerned with their accuracy or inaccuracy, but what we are concerned with is as it were, the moral which is to be drawn from them at the end."

(Report of the Trial continues on page 4)

FREEDOM PRESS
— FREE THE P
HOLBORN HALL
SUNDAY, MA
Speake
MARIE LOUISE BERNERI
HERBERT READ
ERNEST SILVERMAN
FENNER BROCKWAY
FOR SOLIDARITY
:: IMPRISONED

For Anarchism

COMMENTARY

"If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose . . . Under a Government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is in prison . . . on that separate but more free and honourable ground, where the State places those who are not with her but against her—the only house in a Slave State in which a free man can abide with honour."

THOREAU.

5th MAY, 1945.

Fortnightly, 2d.

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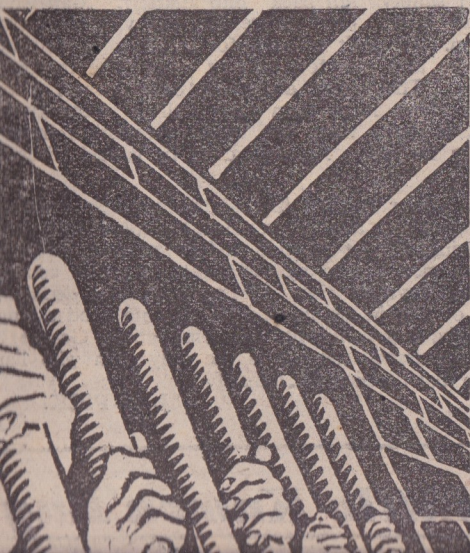
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in prison, shall regard ourselves as having gained no triumph if we merely obtain their release. We must also fight against the laws and the institutions, instruments and agents of an authoritarian governing class, which have made possible their imprisonment. Our campaign, therefore, must be threefold. We must demand and struggle for, firstly, the release of our three comrades, secondly, the elimination of all laws or regulations that interfere with the freedom of speech, thirdly, the abolition of the Special Branch, that sinister body of political police which has been growing up in this country in unhealthy secrecy for some years and which represents a powerful enemy of all freedom.

The Freedom Press Defence Committees in London, Glasgow, Birmingham, Bristol and other towns, which represent a wide variety of groups and individuals whose immediate concern is the freedom of speech and writing, are commencing a campaign of public meet-



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The Freedom Press Defence Committees in London, Glasgow, Birmingham, Bristol and other towns, which represent a wide variety of groups and individuals whose immediate concern is the freedom of speech and writing, are commencing a campaign of public meetings in various parts of the country, and all kinds of assistance to the committees will be welcomed. But action should not be restricted to that for which the Committees take responsibility. Every supporter of freedom should try to interest his friends and work-mates. The factory, the shop and the field, as well as the meeting place and the columns of the press, should be made the sites of discussion and action to obtain these three objectives, which we repeat. Demand—

1. The release of the three anarchists.
2. The withdrawal of all restrictions on freedom of speech or writing.
3. The abolition of the political police, under whatever name it is disguised.

Glasgow Hits Back

The response to the call for the defence of 'Freedom of Expression' at the meeting under the auspices of the Glasgow Freedom Defence Committee in the Cosmo Cinema on the 22nd



CO-OPERATION or CONTROL

THE war in Europe is almost over. Power has defeated Power. Power must use force, and war is the inevitable outcome of politics, of the governmental attitude. Hitler tried to return to the use of direct violence, naked power, to smash the mask which hundreds of years of parliamentary democracy have created to hide the workings of tyranny. The Allies replied in kind. They did not fight for liberty, but to destroy that menace to the mask. Some politicians succeeded in working themselves into a state of moral indignation about Hitler's bestial methods. Their own have been more subtle. The Bretton Woods proposals for the domination of the world by American capital are a more refined form of power than Hitler's bludgeons. Nowadays, the people have to be persuaded that they are fighting for freedom: otherwise they will not fight.

No wonder so many workers are cynical: there's little poetry in politics, and none to be found on the battlefield. When Roosevelt is mourned as a defender of freedom and Stalin hailed as a liberator then cynicism is not to be wondered at! From the point of view of capitalist society Roosevelt was a great man, but ask the American miners whether he was their father and protector and the champion of their liberty! Again, the Atlantic Charter wasn't a very impressive document, but even that seems to have been mislaid.

There are opposition politicians, certainly, but how many of these hold the same views now as they did before the war? How many would continue to hold their present views were they given the opportunity of power? One government proves to be very like another. Sincere politicians find it impossible to alter the system while working as a part of it—they seek to abolish the very machine in which they are cog-wheels. Opposition or governmentalist, you are part of the same machine, performing your little function. Power does not mind what you say or what you do, as long as you say and do through their channels. That is why anarchists are so unpopular: they refuse these channels, they are not so easy to control. There are interests behind politics which eventually tie politicians hands and foot, so that they must behave, in power, almost the same as their predecessors in every way.

All right, there are good reasons for the prevailing cynicism—ask the miners what they think about their Union leaders if you don't believe me. But if you are reading *War Commentary* I imagine you do believe me.

We all go on a pilgrimage to find what we feel to be the truth, and once disillusioned with politics, where can we turn? We cannot put our faith in the efficacy of any sort of political action to alter society.

Anarchism is not a creed to be accepted wholesale at this point. It is an individual discovery. Anarchists cannot hope to convert masses. They can only explain and explain until those ready for anarchism understand why the idea of a society without government is much more than an ideal—it is a way of life, possible here and now as well as in the future. An Anarchist society will only be brought into being BY ANARCHISTS, co-operating through that method of worker's organisation we call syndicalism.

Power is not an abstract theory, nor is anarchism. They are evident as facts, actions, everywhere, at all times. Power is going to be still more evident. Governments do their best to blind the people, but they cannot always succeed. Do you think that "Controls" are going to be more than nominally relaxed after the war? I don't think so. For the workers there will be no after the war. Capitalism has learnt from Nazism that it must tighten its hold or disintegrate.

It is not easy so to live as a free man. It is much easier simply to hold "anarchist" views. It is not only Government, it is Management; it is not only Management, it is the foreman; it is not only the foreman, it is the Trades Union official who presents milk-and-water demands and says they are yours. These are protecting their interests against you, and in many cases are representing Power.

Anarchism implies that a man must know what freedom means to him personally. If you have got as far as this you can't go back. Nothing less than a free life and a free society will content you. From now on, as things tighten up, it will be more difficult than ever to be what you are. It should be a fundamental ethical maxim that **NO MAN SHOULD BE PERSUADED TO TAKE ANY ACTION, THE CAUSE AND EFFECT OF WHICH HE IS IGNORANT.** Governments live by transgressing this law of human dignity and freedom.

Anarchism is the only vital social creed in existence to-day. The others have been disproved: they have shown themselves to be mere political weapons. Anarchists cannot, unlike Communists, coerce co-operation, nor descend to demagogic ranting and falsification. That is why they must appeal to the individual to cling to what he KNOWS of freedom, and to strive to understand more, to demand more when he understands it, to co-operate with others to obtain it, to prove his understanding in the workshop.

Before long we may be reduced to a state when simple dignity will be difficult to uphold. But freedom is a vital force. Politics are no good; all right. Cynicism is no good, just negative, having no vitality. Anarchism works NOW, individually, as well as later, communally. It needs conscious anarchists to prove this and to show the way.

Anarchism is generally accused of being "too good to be true", utopian. A Utopia, however, is a blue-print, and what's more, a blue-print seen in an intellectual dream. Anarchism is no blue-print. It dictates no system, it points the way, and suggests a method. It goes far beyond the insistence upon programmes or "rights". It insists on a way of life transcending the norms which Law pretends are the boundaries of permissible activity. It does not see man as a part of an Order, New or Old, nor as a poor creature to be made happy and contented at the expense of liberty. If there's going to be any meaning in his life a man must be free. This is a fact, not a phrase; it is *done*, not thought. What you think doesn't matter. Anarchism *acts*, because a free man has to be free to live.

Anarchism knows that all men could work, with full responsibility for their work, on a basis of co-operation, in a society without any sort of coercive power. Men don't do this, because they are afraid. Fear creates power. Power creates further fear, organises fear, exploits it, creates Law, binds with chains, mental as well as economic.

The cry goes up that anarchy is chaos. Do you imagine that because there are no longer any policemen, judges, etc., that there will therefore be no sort of organised life at all? There has to be organisation before two men can carry a table from one side of a room to the other. But there need be no policeman to tell them they must do it, or Manager to tell them how. The only leadership in free organisation is based upon love, or if you don't like that word, on the respect given to ability. George is good at a job, let him show us how to set about it. Ability will no longer have any power-platform it can mount. Can you imagine people voluntarily restoring Power once they've realised it should be smashed?

Free work is vocational. Organisation in work which is your own—miners in mines, dockers at the docks—requires no orders backed by force to see that it succeeds. It succeeds because it grows from the people themselves, from the soil of their activity. The Trade Union movement failed because the organisation was placed in the hands of men who were allowed to become officials, and officialdom likes to keep its behind warm on the office chair rather than to return and sweat down the Pit. Officials exist because the men continue to allow them to carry on this undignified bargaining with the employers instead of taking direct action, by-passing this parasitic bureaucracy or destroying it. But during this war the workers have proved they can take things surely into their own hands.

A free organisation can only grow where there is the desire and the need for it, and the only possible foundation for a true division of function is the acceptance of fundamental equality.

But we can't simply "fall back" into anarchy. Man isn't just "natural" any more. Only oppression and violence make an animal of him. He isn't natural, for instance, in that he lives in huge cities and eats food out of tins. The machine has come to stay. That's why anarchism only attracts those people who care about more than their bellies. Security is found in prison, if that's what you want. Anarchism insists upon the necessity for risk. Freedom can't be gained without risk.

The men of power succeed in maintaining their position only because the people as a whole are afraid to admit that they are capable of living without coercion and government, without direction by other men backed by the threat of police action. Such an admission involves risk. It's an individual decision and the workers of Britain are making it. It's no good saying "I could live without government, but what about George?" That's avoiding the issue. George is the only man who has the right to make that decision for himself.

J. B. PICK.

RAILROADS TO FREEDOM

Little Known Eng

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Anarchism is generally accused of being "too good to be true", utopian. A Utopia, however, is a blue-print, and what's more, a blue-print seen in an intellectual dream. Anarchism is no blue-print. It dictates no system, it points the way, and suggests a method. It goes far beyond the insistence upon programmes or "rights". It insists on a way of life transcending the norms which Law pretends are the boundaries of permissible activity. It does not see man as a part of an Order, New or Old, nor as a poor creature to be made happy and contented at the expense of liberty. If there's going to be any meaning in his life a man must be free. This is a fact, not a phrase; it is *done*, not thought. What you think doesn't matter. Anarchism *acts*, because a free man has to be free to live.

division of function is the acceptance of fundamental equality. But we can't simply "fall back" into anarchy. Man isn't just "natural" any more. Only oppression and violence make an animal of him. He isn't natural, for instance, in that he lives in huge cities and eats food out of tins. The machine has come to stay. That's why anarchism only attracts those people who care about more than their bellies. Security is found in prison, if that's what you want. Anarchism insists upon the necessity for risk. Freedom can't be gained without risk.

The men of power succeed in maintaining their position only because the people as a whole are afraid to admit that they are capable of living without coercion and government, without direction by other men backed by the threat of police action. Such an admission involves risk. It's an individual decision and the workers of Britain are making it. It's no good saying "I could live without government, but what about George?" That's avoiding the issue. George is the only man who has the right to make that decision for himself.

J. B. PICK.

RAILROADS TO FREEDOM

PIECE by piece, the form of the promised post-war Utopia takes shape. One of the contributory details concerns means to improve existing rail transport facilities, including vast reconstructions of permanent way to allow for speeds of at least 80 miles an hour. The five-year plan outlined by the four main line companies indicates a rather wider plan than hitherto, of patching and pain-splashing a social service whose progress private enterprise has constantly thwarted. However, the utterances of railway spokesmen indicate that railways will remain the source of substantial profits for years to come, especially as the chairman of the largest of the four groups informed his fellow-directors that there would probably be a considerable increase in fares immediately peace-time operation was resumed. Rather apt was the remark made by a soldier and overheard on the Underground, "They expect you to fight for your country, but they don't expect you to see it."

It is regrettable that the majority of railway workers still believe in the existing trade unions as a means to social progress, for it cannot be denied that the operational requirements of railway work create a lesser indifference to social conditions than is the case in many static trades. In the organs of railway unions, arguments are still confined to the narrow differences between privately owned and nationalised systems. One feels that most of the class-conscious and genial comradeship which exists between railway workers is frustrated from any ultimate expression by its concentration on to the deadening processes of union routine. Presumably adherence to the ideas of State-controlled unions and ultimately nationalisation would result in an economic security, even if it was at bare existence level. It cannot be denied that the all-important person in society is the worker, and the logical development to that assertion is that the producers, being the only really necessary class in society, should therefore fulfil

lities of those railways, if they had pursued a progressive policy throughout. But progress is only made when conditions force it, or when it appears to be a quick-yielding profitable step. The co-relation of the coal industry and steam locomotion is one which remains a prolonged and disgusting exhibit of just how private enterprise or, for that matter, State control (which was assumed under Defence Regulations, 1939) can retard the inception of a healthier and more efficient method of transport and distribution. Steam locomotion adds its billowing steam and smoke to the already filth-charged atmosphere of city life, because the cost of electrification would partially dissolve the profits made by rail transport companies.

The extensive Southern Railway electrification is often cited as an example of progress, but it has nevertheless to be qualified. The Southern, having proportionately a small amount of freight traffic, relies mostly on its passenger services for revenue. Its system fans out from London to serve a popular suburban area and a residential and holiday countryside. Around London steam traction reached saturation point and unless increased services could be operated, the ever expanding South London population would have been forced to travel by road. Electrification was the only solution, the superior acceleration of electric trains between so many intermediate stops allowed an increased number of trains to run; greatly increased efficiency and the healthy absence of smoke were subsidiary but not decisive factors. Once having embarked on a large electrification scheme, additional routes so converted lessened the overall expense and will continue to do so as regards running costs and maintenance. An idea of the jump in revenue due to electrification of the Southern can be gained by the fact that the number of passengers arriving at London termini increased in nine years by 200,000 daily (1938 figures) and 400 more trains were handled each day in 1938 than were operated in 1929.

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Recently one of capitalism's errand boys, C. R. Attlee, said that he did not see that a porter on the L.N.E.R. was any less a cog in the machine than he would be under State control. Having convinced us that there is no difference for the individual anyhow, it is imperative that the militant railway workers waste no time or energy supporting a scheme that does nothing to solve their problems, the fundamental issues facing all sections of the working-class. Railways are particularly suited to almost spontaneous decentralisation and direct control by the railwaymen themselves. That is the only satisfactory solution to their problems, the step towards abundant living and a fully constructive role in providing society with a faultless but happy method of distribution and transport.

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The *Daily Worker* of the 10/4/45 carries an article by Harry McShane, C.P. Organiser for the West of Scotland, on the case of John Connor, who is serving a sentence of twelve months hard labour in the U.S.S.R. for "disorderly conduct and drunkenness." McShane does not press for the release of John Connor. On the other hand he eulogizes the lenient treatment the Soviet Authorities give to merchant seamen. (We would welcome further information on this case.)

Little Known English Joseph

The history of British Socialism would be seriously incomplete if it lacked a reference to Joseph Lane. He is, nevertheless, unknown to those bourgeois historians who have essayed to write history by compiling a list of the activities of those who became celebrities, and who were mainly drawn from their own class. Not knowing the movement from the inside through active participation, they could not know these lesser known figures who did the real spade work.

Lane can safely be named the father of the modern socialist movement, and a complete history of his activities from 1879 to 1884 would make a chapter in itself. It was not through the work of inspired prophets, nor through the publication of Marx' Capital that the movement grew to its present proportions; this is due in the main to the work of groups of poor working men. Lane was born in Oxfordshire, and spent his early life working on the land, under the most enslaving poverty. Soon, by necessity, he took an interest in the infamous Game and Land laws, and quickly developed into a thinker and a rebel. In '65 he came to London, arriving at a time when vigorous fights for free speech were in progress. He participated in the struggles at Hyde Park when the authorities tried to stop meetings being held there—struggles which showed a spirit of liberty which is sadly lacking to-day.

He lived through the epoch of the Paris Commune of 1871, and gathered round him a few workers who set out to vindicate the Commune. He became acquainted with the work and life of Robert Owen, which undoubtedly affected his mental outlook for the rest of his life, and led him to take up a communist and anti-parliamentary attitude. When the International Socialist Club in Rose Street was founded (foreign refugees, mainly French and German, made up the bulk of the membership), Lane joined with Frank Kitz and others to form the English Section. When John Most was prosecuted the

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A concentration on trade unionism and nationalisation will contain nothing more than a misdirection of vital working-class agitation; its result will be to delay indefinitely the emancipation of the workers by substituting one form of restriction (and there are reasons to believe it will be a more repressive one) for another.

Although periodic Government subsidies will be supplied it is hardly likely that private enterprise, seeing in railways the source of good profits for many decades to come, will allow nationalisation to take place anyway, but it is as well that the workers realise that nationalisation as has already been demonstrated in many countries, notably France and Russia, will result in railways run by departmental bureaucrats, who are just as crafty in their abilities to keep the workers in continued subjection as the high-salaried managers and directors in the present railway combines. Such bureaucrats at their best could differ little from the present Civil Service or Trade Union pattern. So advocates of nationalisation are really struggling to assume the burden of just another clique of high-salaried officials, who are about as keen to raise the workers' standard of living to ultimate equality as Churchill is to allow minority nations to look after their own affairs.

Nor does the bureaucratic trend of nationalistic control pre-suppose efficiency; when the main interest is directed towards high payments towards the executive staff, the same disintegration which is the essence of all the reactionary tendencies in the present shareholding, or unearned income system, will take place.

Apologists for the existing conditions are for ever offering fantastic excuses for the outmoded facilities which remain the core of British railway operation. Although consistent publicity is given to the achievements of British railways working under war conditions, the claims made become feeble when compared with the possibi-

ties for revenue. Its system runs out from London to serve a popular suburban area and a residential and holiday countryside. Around London steam traction reached saturation point and unless increased services could be operated, the ever expanding South London population would have been forced to travel by road. Electrification was the only solution, the superior acceleration of electric trains between so many intermediate stops allowed an increased number of trains to run; greatly increased efficiency and the healthy absence of smoke were subsidiary but not decisive factors. Once having embarked on a large electrification scheme, additional routes so converted lessened the overall expense and will continue to do so as regards running costs and maintenance. An idea of the jump in revenue due to electrification of the Southern can be gained by the fact that the number of passengers arriving at London termini increased in nine years by 200,000 daily (1938 figures) and 400 more trains were handled each day in 1938 than were operated in 1929.

Expense is usually the whine covering the retention of inefficient and unhealthy social services, and it is in the stagnant backwaters of finance that we discover the reactionary and retarding influences. Private ownership requires the payment of shareholders, directors and managers, and nationalisation, the maintenance of an extravagant bureaucracy. The fact remains that raw materials are available, as is the labour required to convert and shape them. If the materials and labour expended in a couple of weeks of war production were applied to railways, we should possess an up-to-the-minute, efficient and healthy transport service. But such sweeping reconstruction cannot be expected from opportunist elements of either the private or nationalised forms of control, and for the railway workers to cherish hopes of improvements in their conditions of work at the hands of either, is to overlook the fundamentals on which all railways organisation is based. The same applies to all concerns operating within the realms of capitalism or State control. Workers will for ever exist at subsistence level and society will for ever be served by shabby and faulty services as long as their form of organisation exists, a form supporting a class of parasites which drains the wealth and withholds its labour from the constructive role in human society.

During the General Strike the railway workers demonstrated their class-consciousness by supporting the coal-miners; to retain that solidarity until the realisation is widely held that only by reliance in their own efforts can any satisfactory change in the structure of society be made, is the pressing need to-day. When, no longer misled by the avaricious financiers, the parasitic shareholders and bureaucrats, and the self-indulgent trade union leaders, the workers decide to handle things themselves, and throw out society's bloodsuckers, then can they look forward to the possibilities of decent working conditions, ample leisure and the facilities afforded by efficient and healthy social services. Meanwhile, such little improvements at present

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McShane also states "The guilt of Connor, and the allegation that an armed militiaman was injured does not seem to have been disputed." Now the reason this was never disputed is because there was no charge against Connor of injuring a militiaman, and this is the first time it has been suggested.

McShane makes out it is "Anto-Soviet Propaganda" yet the week before, on the 4/4/45 the same writer was protesting at the scandalous treatment meted out to Indian Seamen. Now why can't he be consistent, and complain about the scandalous sentence imposed on John Connor. This would be too much to expect from McShane and the *Daily Worker* so we will have to carry out protest without them.

The C.P. organised a meeting at Cambuslang the Sunday following that which was organised by the Anarchist Federation. The workers in this district boycotted the C.P. meeting, less than 40 being in attendance, as again over 1,000 at the Anarchist meeting. This should let them see that opinion here is on the side of the Soviets' victim. If they want further proof, it is forthcoming at no distant date.

A letter from the Foreign Office acknowledging the telegrams sent from various meetings throughout Scotland organised by the Anarchists has been received.

The Petition is meeting with a great response. All comrades are asked to get them filled and returned as soon as possible. Everyone should do all in his power to help and demand the release of Seaman John Connor.

EDDIE SHAW.

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Lane scraped enough money to buy some type, a small press and printer's furniture, in order to publish a series of leaflets for free distribution. The first was entitled "The Starvation Army", a criticism of the Salvation Army, and was a useful work as General Booth was claiming at that time to be able to solve the problem of poverty with his "Darkest England Scheme". "The Emigration Fraud" was issued under the nominal auspices of a propaganda committee composed of Kitz, A. G. Barker, the brothers Murray and other working men. Their efforts bore good fruit, for they were amongst the first to bring revolutionary principles to the masses. Only those who have lived through that period will know what persecutions and prosecutions were the lot of the active propagandist. When Joe Lane proposed holding open-air meetings, James Murray told him he was young and did not know anything about it, that the propertied classes were like a pack of wolves and would tear them in pieces if they went out into the parks and streets. Lane, Kitz and others went out nevertheless and blazed a trail of revolutionary action. The days of Chartism were near enough still to intimidate men who were not really courageous. Peterloo was even yet a living memory. . . .

The late H. M. Hyndman asked Lane to meet him, and proposed that they should form an Independent Labour Party. A meeting of delegates was called at the Rose Street club, and the "Democratic Federation", afterwards to become the "Social Democratic Federation", was formed. Lane was opposed to parliamentary action, and would have nothing to do with them. Lane was amongst the many comrades who were suspicious of Hyndman because they thought he

LIBERATION or CONTROL

Power is not an abstract theory, nor is anarchism. They are evident as facts, actions, everywhere, at all times. Power is going to be still more evident. Governments do their best to blind the people, but they cannot always succeed. Do you think that "Controls" are going to be more than nominally relaxed after the war? I don't think so. For the workers there will be no after the war. Capitalism has learnt from Nazism that it must tighten its hold or disintegrate.

It is not easy so-to live as a free man. It is much easier simply to hold "anarchist" views. It is not only Government, it is Management; it is not only Management, it is the foreman; it is not only the foreman, it is the Trades Union official who presents milk-and-water demands and says they are yours. These are protecting their interests against you, and in many cases are representing Power.

Anarchism implies that a man must know what freedom means to him personally. If you have got as far as this you can't go back. Nothing less than a free life and a free society will content you. From now on, as things tighten up, it will be more difficult than ever to be what you are. It should be a fundamental ethical maxim that **NO MAN SHOULD BE PERSUADED TO TAKE ANY ACTION, THE CAUSE AND EFFECT OF WHICH HE IS IGNORANT.** Governments live by transgressing this law of human dignity and freedom.

Anarchism is the only vital social creed in existence to-day. The others have been disproved: they have shown themselves to be mere political weapons. Anarchists cannot, unlike Communists, coerce co-operation, nor descend to demagogic ranting and falsification. That is why they must appeal to the individual to cling to what he KNOWS of freedom, and to strive to understand more, to demand more when he understands it, to co-operate with others to obtain it, to prove his understanding in the workshop.

Before long we may be reduced to a state when simple dignity will be difficult to uphold. But freedom is a vital force. Politics are no good; all right. Cynicism is no good, just negative, having no vitality. Anarchism works NOW, individually, as well as later, communally. It needs *conscious* anarchists to prove this and to show the way.

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Anarchism knows that all men could work, with full responsibility for their work, on a basis of co-operation, in a society without any sort of coercive power. Men don't do this, because they are afraid. Fear creates power. Power creates further fear, organises fear, exploits it, creates Law, binds with chains, mental as well as economic.

The cry goes up that anarchy is chaos. Do you imagine that because there are no longer any policemen, judges, etc., that there will therefore be no sort of organised life at all? There has to be organisation before two men can carry a table from one side of a room to the other. But there need be no policeman to tell them they must do it, or Manager to tell them how. The only leadership in free organisation is based upon love, or if you don't like that word, on the respect given to ability. George is good at a job, let him show us how to set about it. Ability will no longer have any power-platform it can mount. Can you imagine people voluntarily restoring Power once they've realised it should be smashed?

Free work is vocational. Organisation in work which is your own—miners in mines, dockers at the docks—requires no orders backed by force to see that it succeeds. It succeeds because it grows from the people themselves, from the soil of their activity. The Trade Union movement failed because the organisation was placed in the hands of men who were allowed to become officials, and officialdom likes to keep its behind warm on the office chair rather than to return and sweat down the Pit. Officials exist because the men continue to allow them to carry on this undignified bargaining with the employers instead of taking direct action, by-passing this parasitic bureaucracy or destroying it. But during this war the workers have proved they can take things surely into their own hands.

A free organisation can only grow where there is the desire and the need for it, and the only possible foundation for a true division of function is the acceptance of fundamental equality.

But we can't simply "fall back" into anarchy. Man isn't just "natural" any more. Only oppression and violence make an animal of him. He isn't natural, for instance, in that he lives in huge cities and eats food out of tins. The machine has come to stay. That's why anarchism only attracts those people who care about more than their bellies. Security is found in prison, if that's what you want. Anarchism insists upon the necessity for risk. Freedom can't be gained without risk.

The men of power succeed in maintaining their position only because the people as a whole are afraid to admit that they are capable of living without coercion and government, without direction by other men backed by the threat of police action. Such an admission involves risk. It's an individual decision, and the workers of Britain are making it. It's no good saying "I could live without government, but what about George?" That's avoiding the issue. George is the only man who has the right to make that decision for himself.

J. B. PICK.

Atrocities and Counter-Atrocities

At last, after many years of Nazi concentration camps, the Allied authorities have chosen to discover the atrocities which took place in them and to make use of the revelations to popularise their attempts to create their own tyranny over the German people. The facts revealed were known or suspected for a long time by those who were really interested in the fate of the revolutionaries who had been made the victims of the Nazis, but it has only just become convenient for the Allied governments to recognise them. The method used by the American commanders appears to be one of punishing the German people for having been victimised by the Nazis, as is illustrated in the following incident quoted by the *Evening Standard* on the 23rd April:

"The German citizens of Gardelagen, near Magdeburg, have begun to bury victims of the massacre in which 1000 political prisoners were locked in a barn and burned to death.

The town's Burgomeister was told he must produce one German citizen for every victim of the massacre.

This citizen will be compelled to dig the grave of the victim, wrap the body in a shroud and give proper burial. In addition that citizen—whose name will appear on the gravestone underneath that of the victim (if identified)—will be responsible for the care of the grave during his lifetime, and will have to provide for it to be carried on after his death by another German.

In this way the memory of the victims of the Gardelagen massacre will be perpetuated.

The first German citizens digging the graves to-day were mostly elderly, portly Germans who sweated under the muzzle of the gun of a Sherman tank, while American soldiers kicked the reluctant ones into activity.

Several complained that the work of disinterring the corpses already partly buried by German soldiers made them ill; but there was no respite for them."

When the Nazis made the Jews in Vienna scrub the pavements, great and just indignation was shown. But when the German people, who have themselves been the victims of the Nazis, are forced to perform even more revolting tasks, by their new American military masters, we do not find any great outcry from the ardent supporters of democracy in this country.

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The history of British Socialism would be seriously incomplete if it lacked a reference to Joseph Lane. He is, nevertheless, unknown to those bourgeois historians who have essayed to write history by compiling a list of the activities of those who became celebrities, and who were mainly drawn from their own class. Not knowing the movement from the inside through active participation, they could not know these lesser known figures who did the real spade work.

Lane can safely be named the father of the modern socialist movement, and a complete list of his activities from 1879 to 1884 would make a chapter in itself. It was not through the work of inspired prophets, nor through the publication of Marx' Capital that the movement grew to its present proportions; this is due in the main to the work of groups of poor working men. Lane was born in Oxfordshire, and spent his early life working on the land, under the most enslaving poverty. Soon, by necessity, he took an interest in the infamous Game and Land laws, and quickly developed into a thinker and a rebel. In '65 he came to London, arriving at a time when vigorous fights for free speech were in progress. He participated in the struggles at Hyde Park when the authorities tried to stop meetings being held there—struggles which showed a spirit of liberty which is sadly lacking to-day.

He lived through the epoch of the Paris Commune of 1871, and gathered round him a few workers who set out to vindicate the Communards. He became acquainted with the work and life of Robert Owen, which undoubtedly affected his mental outlook for the rest of his life, and led him to take up a communist and anti-parliamentary attitude. When the International Socialist Club in Rose Street was founded (foreign refugees, mainly French and German, made up the bulk of the membership), Lane joined with Frank Kitz and others to form the English Section. When John Most was prosecuted they formed a Defence Committee, and published an English edition of his *Freiheit* (Freedom) which was sold on the streets and outside the Old Bailey. Most was tried for a "revolutionary libel"

had started the S.D.F. in opposition to the Republican Movement of Charles Bradlaugh. The S.D.F. was the first English Marxist organization, although neither Marx nor Engels would have anything to do with it. Lane and his comrades carried on with their own organization, the "Labour Emancipation League" meanwhile.

Socialism continued to grow and to attract attention both from the press and the public. When the split occurred in the S.D.F. William Morris and the best brains left and the "Socialist League" was started, with its paper *The Commonweal*, Morris and Lane were joint editors—a partnership which lasted for years. Morris was one of England's leading poets and artists; Lane was a carman, one of the poorest paid workers in those days; yet there was a strong bond of comradeship between these two men.

Lane never called himself an Anarchist, but the publication of his "Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto" sufficiently indicates his opinions. What the Socialist and Labour movement in this country owes to his life and efforts will not, and cannot ever be fully known. Fearlessly, in the fight for human rights, he never sought to gain position or power. It was enough for him to know that he was helping to break the shackles that bound labour to a life of poverty and slavery.

MAT KAVANAGH.

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to serve a popular suburban area and residential and holiday countryside. Around London steam traction reached saturation point and unless increased services could be operated, the ever expanding South London population would have been forced to travel by road. Electrification was the only solution, the superior acceleration of electric trains between so many intermediate stops allowed an increased number of trains to run; greatly increased efficiency and the healthy absence of smoke were subsidiary but not decisive factors. Once having embarked on a large electrification scheme, additional routes so converted lessened the overall expense and will continue to do so as regards running costs and maintenance. An idea of the jump in revenue due to electrification of the Southern can be gained by the fact that the number of passengers arriving at London termini increased in nine years by 200,000 daily (1938 figures) and 400 more trains were handled each day in 1938 than were operated in 1929.

Expense is usually the whine covering the retention of inefficient and unhealthy social services, and it is in the stagnant backwaters of finance that we discover the reactionary and retarding influences. Private ownership requires the payment of shareholders, directors and managers, and nationalisation, the maintenance of an extravagant bureaucracy. The fact remains that raw materials are available, as is the labour required to convert and shape them. If the materials and labour expended in a couple of weeks of war production were applied to railways, we should possess an up-to-the-minute, efficient and healthy transport service. But such sweeping reconstruction cannot be expected from opportunist elements of either the private or nationalised forms of control, and for the railway workers to cherish hopes of improvements in their conditions of work at the hands of either, is to overlook the fundamentals on which all railways organisation is based. The same applies to all concerns operating within the realms of capitalism or State control. Workers will for ever exist at subsistence level and society will for ever be served by shabby and faulty services as long as their form of organisation exists, a form supporting a class of parasites which drains the wealth and withholds its labour from the constructive role in human society.

During the General Strike the railway workers demonstrated their class-consciousness by supporting the coal-miners; to retain that solidarity until the realisation is widely held that only by reliance in their own efforts can any satisfactory change in the structure of society be made, is the pressing need to-day. When, no longer misled by the avaricious financiers, the parasitic shareholders and bureaucrats, and the self-indulgent trade union leaders, the workers decide to handle things themselves, and throw out society's bloodsuckers, then can they look forward to the possibilities of decent working conditions, ample leisure and the facilities afforded by efficient and healthy social services. Meanwhile, such little improvements at present

The Communists and Seaman Connor

The *Daily Worker* of the 10/4/45 carries an article by Harry McShane, C.P. Organiser for the West of Scotland, on the case of John Connor, who is serving a sentence of twelve months hard labour in the U.S.S.R. for "disorderly conduct and drunkenness." McShane does not press for the release of John Connor. On the other hand he eulogizes the lenient treatment the Soviet Authorities give to merchant seamen. (We would welcome further information from other seamen who have been to the U.S.S.R. recently). In the article he states that he met two Americans "who were in the club just after the incident"; he then gives their version. Now he has not produced these men, in the way the Anarchists brought two of John Connor's shipmates before the public meetings, two seamen who were with him at the time of the incident, and were material witnesses.

McShane also states "The guilt of Connor, and the allegation that an armed militiaman was injured does not seem to have been disputed." Now the reason this was never disputed is because there was no charge against Connor of injuring a militiaman, and this is the first time it has been suggested.

McShane makes out it is "Anto-Soviet Propaganda" yet the week before, on the 4/4/45 the same writer was protesting at the scandalous treatment meted out to Indian Seamen. Now why can't he be consistent, and complain about the scandalous sentence imposed on John Connor. This would be too much to expect from McShane and the *Daily Worker* so we will have to carry out protest without them.

The C.P. organised a meeting at Cambuslang the Sunday following that which was organised by the Anarchist Federation. The workers in this district boycotted the C.P. meeting, less than 40 being in attendance, as again over 1,000 at the Anarchist meeting. This should let them see that opinion here is on the side of the Soviets' victim. If they want further proof, it is forthcoming at no distant date.

A letter from the Foreign Office acknowledging the telegrams sent from various meetings throughout Scotland organised by the Anarchists has been received.

The Petition is meeting with a great response. All comrades are asked to get them filled and returned as soon as possible. Everyone should do all in his power to help and demand the release of Seaman John Connor.

EDDIE SHAW.

poverty. By necessity, he took an interest in the infamous Game and Land laws, and quickly developed into a thinker and a rebel. In '65 he came to London, arriving at a time when vigorous fights for free speech were in progress. He participated in the struggles at Hyde Park when the authorities tried to stop meetings being held there—struggles which showed a spirit of liberty which is sadly lacking to-day.

He lived through the epoch of the Paris Commune of 1871, and gathered round him a few workers who set out to vindicate the Communards. He became acquainted with the work and life of Robert Owen, which undoubtedly affected his mental outlook for the rest of his life, and led him to take up a communist and anti-parliamentary attitude. When the International Socialist Club in Rose Street was founded (foreign refugees, mainly French and German, made up the bulk of the membership), Lane joined with Frank Kitz and others to form the English Section. When John Most was prosecuted they formed a Defence Committee, and published an English edition of his *Freiheit* (Freedom) which was sold on the streets and outside the Old Bailey. Most was tried for a "seditions libel" against the German Kaiser in the paper, so this bringing out of an English edition and its open sale on the streets constituted an open defiance of the Government for bringing the prosecution.

Lane scraped enough money to buy some type, a small press and printer's furniture, in order to publish a series of leaflets for free distribution. The first was entitled "The Starvation Army", a criticism of the Salvation Army, and was a useful work as General Booth was claiming at that time to be able to solve the problem of poverty with his "Darkest England Scheme". "The Emigration Fraud" was issued under the nominal auspices of a propaganda committee composed of Kitz, A. G. Barker, the brothers Murray and other working men. Their efforts bore good fruit, for they were amongst the first to bring revolutionary principles to the masses. Only those who have lived through that period will know what persecutions and prosecutions were the lot of the active propagandist. When Joe Lane proposed holding open-air meetings, James Murray told him he was young and did not know anything about it; that the propertied classes were like a pack of wolves and would tear them in pieces if they went out into the parks and streets. Lane, Kitz and others went out nevertheless and blazed a trail of revolutionary action. The days of Chartism were near enough still to intimidate men who were not really courageous. Peterloo was even yet a living memory.

The late H. M. Hyndman asked Lane to meet him, and proposed that they should form an Independent Labour Party. A meeting of delegates was called at the Rose Street club, and the "Democratic Federation", afterwards to become the "Social Democratic Federation", was formed. Lane was opposed to parliamentary action, and would have nothing to do with them. Lane was amongst the many comrades who were suspicious of Hyndman because they thought he

was an Anti-Socialist Communist sufficiently indicates his opinions. What the Socialist and Labour movement in this country owes to his life and efforts will not, and cannot ever be fully known. Fearlessly, in the fight for human rights, he never sought to gain position or power. It was enough for him to know that he was helping to break the shackles that bound labour to a life of poverty and slavery.

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Anarchism and Law

(The Editors of "War Commentary" do not agree with all the opinions with regard to the law which Alex Comfort expresses in the following article. For instance, they regard the judicature itself as being part of the coercive machinery by which the power of the State is maintained. Nevertheless, they regard the article, in spite of its controversial nature, as containing many valuable points relevant to the present situation, and publish it as the beginning of a discussion on the Anarchist attitude towards law).

THE prosecution of the four London Anarchists is not an isolated act of political repression, it marks a stage in the social evolution of law in this country, a process of which historians are more aware than jurists. Law is the expression of the common conscience of mankind—laws are the expression of the civilisation that produces them: the history of the constitutional development of Law is the history of the forms of society and the conceptions of social order that accompany them in turn. As social institutions produced in succession the legal institutions of the country, as the rise of free cities led to a systematised body of common-law, as monarchy and unified government led to the establishment of the King's Peace, so the industrial revolution and the creation of a proletariat led to the rise of a body of statute law defending property, and so the rise of the megalopolitan military state, with its attendant conscription and wars, leads to the gradual supersession of common law and statute by the rule of the order-in-council, the ukase and the political police. Every society creates its new offences—as feudalism created vagrancy, Victorian Capitalism created forgery, the enclosures created the Game Laws, so the transition from

Megalopolis to Tyrannopolis, the regeneration of barbarism, creates as its chief offences dissent, sedition and desertion. Justice consists in the interpretation of laws in the light of Law, and European civilisation is rapidly approaching the point at which the conscience of human life and experience, embodied in Law, is irreconcilable with the laws enacted by the State. In Germany, the collapse of judicial institutions occurred with suddenness and finality. In this country it has been delayed solely by the independence of the Courts, which rests and has rested upon the resistance of the public at large, through recalcitrant individuals, to the rise of non-judicial conceptions of Law. It is in this struggle that the case of the Freedom Press is an episode, as significant in the context of events as the case of *R. vs. Wilkes*, for in it, and in similar cases, the judiciary is facing the issue of its status in future English society.

The Courts must decide, in this and in future prosecutions, whether they will maintain the legislature or the Law, whether they will maintain the independent status which they have so far maintained—and which in the persons of the Judges they continue to maintain—or whether they will submit to become executive in function. No historical process is inevitable. Because we are involved in a continental landslide into barbarism and military dictatorship, we need not resign ourselves. If the public, in the persons of political recalcitrants, will maintain the Law, if the Courts will maintain it, English traditions are strong enough in freedom and Law to resist the threat of political police and of licensed printing, of conscription and suppression, but the Courts and the people, realising their common danger, must maintain each other.

We have no constitution which the judicature can employ to restrain the legislature. They can restrain it only by their decisions, based upon the mass of legal tradition and the support of the people at large. The legal fiction whereby the Crown is the repository of justice, the ultimate judge whom the Judges represent, has been maintained and protected from abuse by the fact that where the Crown and its Judges have been in conflict, and the people have upheld the Judges, the political power of the judicature has been sufficient to safeguard its independence. The legislative voice which now speaks in the name of the Crown is no longer a judicial voice—it is the voice of political adventurers controlling a megalopolitan military state. The voice of the Defence Regulations is nominally the voice of the Crown—it is practically the voice of an irresponsible political caucus which has not even undergone the formality of popular

upon the original principle of all jurisprudence—that the individual human being has, by virtue of his existence and his manhood, rights which are inalienable and responsibilities which cannot be delegated. The conception of natural law, upon which, according to Blackstone, jurisprudence is founded, is in its essence an Anarchist conception. The conception of common law, the existence of a body of custom recognised by common consent and common conscience to be in accordance with human rights and human duties, is an Anarchist conception. The recognition of the responsibility which a human being bears for all those actions which influence the lives and affect the fortunes of other men is the starting-point of Anarchist ethics. The conflict between Anarchism and law which has arisen in this case, and which will continue to arise in a more and more exacerbated form, is due not to the irresponsibility of Anarchists but to the corruption of the universal ideas of equity by irresponsible statute-making. Where Anarchists come into conflict with the legal system, it is not because they are opposed to the conception of law, but because the system of law with which they are in conflict is at variance with human conscience. There are in existence to-day two conflicting systems of law, one which represents the body of human will and experience, and another which exists solely to maintain the authority of the State against that will and against that experience. The public at large is aware of the discrepancy. Let a London crowd see the police chasing a thief, and they will collar the thief, not because they are fulfilling a common-law duty but because the prevention and prohibition of theft are products of normal human will and experience. Let them see an escort chasing a deserter, and they will trip the redcaps. The public shows a more accurate awareness of the powers which law can and cannot arrogate to itself than any of the professional jurists. They do not need to read Blackstone to know that "no laws are binding on the subject that assault the body or violate the conscience". Learned Judges who point out that the multiplicity of wartime regulations tend to bring law and justice into contempt do not carry the distinction to its conclusion. They are aware, but often only very dimly aware, that it is to the maintenance of common-law rights, or, if you prefer it, of human conscience against the State and its encroachments that they owe their right to give judgment in relative political independence. If there had been no Anarchists, they would not be upon the Bench where they now sit. English justice owes more to Wilkes and William Penn than to any legislator or body of legislators.

free societies, but the State and statute law, imposed by a political majority, is not. A Court which upheld the absolute validity of statutes would deliver itself into the hands of the legislature as a purely passive and executive instrument. It would bind itself to accept the natural legality of any act of government from the Parliamentary Bill that provided to boil the Bishop of Rochester's cook in oil to a statute legalising cannibalism. In the submission of the Defence those Courts which have upheld the right of the State to assault the person and violate the conscience of individual subjects by military conscription, by indefinite interment on security grounds, and by the suppression of free political controversy in any section of the community, uniformed or not, have already committed themselves to uphold most of the apparatus of Fascism and to deny the elementary principles of legal theory. The Courts have no control over the complexion of the Government. If they oblige themselves to uphold it, they have no means of controlling any abuse which it may commit, however extreme its complexion. If a Fascist government is returned by the Electorate, then they will uphold Fascism. If a government, duly elected, outlawed all Jews, then they will uphold anti-Semitism. If such a government abolishes law courts and judges, then they will voluntarily wind themselves up. In the submission of the Defence, courts which have committed themselves in this way forfeit their right to be treated as legitimate sources of precedent. It is not that in the present case judgments upholding Defence Regulations of this kind are distinguishable—they are in the fullest sense illegal. It is difficult to believe that, whatever the political future, the judgment of Atkin L. J., dissenting from the enforcement of Regulation 18B will not be the accepted precedent in law, if law is to continue to be something other than mere political execution. Mansfield L. C. J. at least had no doubts about the matter when he ruled "I care not for the supposed dicta of judges, however eminent, if they be contrary to all principle." The arbitrary use of defence regulations, framed for another object to ventilate political spite and to suppress political dissidents is contrary to all principle, and if the Courts uphold it, then it is the Court that will be discredited, not the principle that will be legalised.

Whatever we may feel about the nature and substance of sedition, the employment against it of Regulations 39A at the present stage of the war, and in the present circumstances, can have no conceivable justification. Why were proceedings not instituted against the Freedom Press under sections 1 and 2 of the Incitement to Dis-

BLUE PRINT FOR SAN FRANCISCO

*The Lion, the Alligator and the Bear
Convened a Beastly Conference on Peace;
The Alligator (who was in the Chair)
Said that security required police,
To keep the jackals from the Lion's Share
And to protect those whom the sheep
would fleece.
This being so (a tear fell from his eye)
He and his friends were willing to comply.*

*The Polar Bear protested he was pained
To see the carnivores endure oppression*

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*The Polar Bear protested he was pained
To see the carnivores endure oppression
When chauvinistic sheep should be restrained
From acts of wanton, unprovoked aggression.*

*In solemn words the Lion then explained
They had already met in secret session
And were resolved this Jungle Law to keep:
If sheep attacked them, they would eat the sheep.*

*A woolly delegate then gave a bleat;
He said he always tried to keep the laws
But feared one might become a Lion's meat
Without (if one might say so) proper cause . . .*

*In which event, then who was going to eat
These gendarmes with the formidable jaws?*

*"Yes," said the rabbits, "that is only fair."
"But quite unrealistic," growled the Bear.
R.R.*

tain the Law, if the Courts will maintain it, English traditions are strong enough in freedom and Law to resist the threat of political police and of licensed printing, of conscription and suppression, but the Courts and the people, realising their common danger, must maintain each other.

We have no constitution which the judicature can employ to restrain the legislature. They can restrain it only by their decisions, based upon the mass of legal tradition and the support of the people at large. The legal fiction whereby the Crown is the repository of justice, the ultimate judge whom the Judges represent, has been maintained and protected from abuse by the fact that where the Crown and its Judges have been in conflict, and the people have upheld the Judges, the political power of the judicature has been sufficient to safeguard its independence. The legislative voice which now speaks in the name of the Crown is no longer a judicial voice—it is the voice of political adventurers controlling a megalopolitan military state. The voice of the Defence Regulations is nominally the voice of the Crown—it is practically the voice of an irresponsible political caucus which has not even undergone the formality of popular election during the last nine years. The Judges are constitutionally bound to accept the dictates of the Crown. To-day its dictates and ordinances stand in violation of the principles of justice. The decisions of the Courts are the last barrier between the autocracy of the legislature and the constitutional bases of Law. It is to the Crown that the allegiance of soldiers is due, and it is from the Crown that, in *R. vs. Richards and others*, that allegiance is alleged to have been seduced. If the Crown is represented by a clique of military adventurers—if it is represented by Fascists or anti-semites, by anti-libertarians or megalomaniacs, if it is represented, as is conceivable, by a dictator in whom power has been vested by a majority vote of parliament, then the Courts alone, pursuing not the laws but the principles of Law which they have in the past so courageously asserted to be binding on the Crown itself, have a voice loud enough to prevent the corruption of justice.

If Anarchism is the recognition of ultimate personal responsibility, then Anarchism is also the origin and quintessence of law, not its opponent. The emphasis of Anarchist thought is

public at large is aware of the discrepancy. Let a London crowd see the police chasing a thief, and they will collar the thief, not because they are fulfilling a common-law duty but because the prevention and prohibition of theft are products of normal human will and experience. Let them see an escort chasing a deserter, and they will trip the redcaps. The public shows a more accurate awareness of the powers which law can and cannot arrogate to itself than any of the professional jurists. They do not need to read Blackstone to know that "no laws are binding on the subject that assault the body or violate the conscience". Learned Judges who point out that the multiplicity of wartime regulations tend to bring law and justice into contempt do not carry the distinction to its conclusion. They are aware, but often only very dimly aware, that it is to the maintenance of common-law rights, or, if you prefer it, of human conscience against the State and its encroachments that they owe their right to give judgment in relative political independence. If there had been no Anarchists, they would not be upon the Bench where they now sit. English justice owes more to Wilkes and William Penn than to any legislator or body of legislators.

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(Continued on p. 4)



FIRST THINGS FIRST

When delegates from the United Kingdom, France and other United Nations paused at Montreal on their way to the San Francisco Conference, couponless purchases were their first thought.

Journalists who met the train had difficulty trying to hold representatives long enough even to speak to them.

One shouted: "Sorry, old man, but I have to rush to a store to buy a pair of socks." Another dashed off for a pair of shoes and some, still more ambitious, hoped to be able in the limited time at their disposal to fit themselves out completely before their train left.

Evening Standard, 20/4/45.

It will inspire people of all nations to hear that the first thought of their delegates to

GUILTY LAW

Found guilty but insane of the murder of her infant son at Taunton Assizes in 1881, Emily Giles was sent to Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum.

She died there this week after a fall. She was 87. Verdict: Misadventure.

Evening Standard, 19/4/45.

Who is more insane, this woman who killed her infant son or the system which sent her to prison for sixty-four years?

LATE MIGHT BE NEVER

Ninety-on-year-old Charles H. Dougherty has been awarded by Congress overtime pay for which he has been waiting 67 years. If interest is added he expects the sum will be £200.

It took special legislation to do it. Three Bills have been before Congress about it, the first in 1935. Now the third has been passed.

Evening Standard, 20/4/45.

Congress was obviously in no hurry; had it waited a few years longer to pay the man what was due to him he would have been in the grave!

CHRISTIAN CHARITY

The Rev. F. C. Baker, Vicar of St. Stephen's Coleman-street, E.C., preaching at Uxbridge said:

"We all feel full of righteous indignation at the horrors in German concentration camps. We allow those filthy devilish monsters to free, we should be condoning their atrocities. God expects us to act in His name and punish them with the utmost severity."

Evening Standard, 23/4/45.

Through the Press

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Evening Standard, 20/4/45.

It will inspire people of all nations to hear that the first thought of their delegates to the great San Francisco Conference was for couponless purchases.

TAR, PLEASE!

They already talk of more statues in London. It is inevitable. We must face it.

Roosevelt has been publicly proposed, and if we must have statues, none would deny his priority right. Churchill is a certainty; and if Roosevelt, how refuse Stalin? The three might be grouped together. What an opportunity for the sculptor—Churchill's hat and cigar, Stalin's pipe and moustache, Roosevelt's cigarette holder.

Other candidates readily occur. The proud city has not been short of men great in our generation.

Evening Standard, 24/4/45.

As a matter of fact, if you look at the front cover of "The March to Death" you will see the very thing . . .

HOW UNUSUAL!

A tall, slim, neatly dressed woman spoke to us in perfect English.

She was Princess Sophie of Greece, widow of Prince Christopher of Hesse, first cousin of the Dukes of Kent and the niece of Lord Louis Mountbatten.

The Princess said her husband and her brother, Prince Philip of Greece, now fighting with the British Navy, had been very close to each other on opposite sides during the invasion of Sicily.

She revealed that about two years ago Hitler ordered all members of royal families serving with the German armed forces to be withdrawn from the fronts, and thought it might have been because the Nazis feared some of the princes might try to set up in opposition to Hitler.

Daily Herald, 16/4/45.

Of course, Royal Families on our side go right up to the front . . . ?

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BETTER LOOT CO.

An Edmonton man who advertised in a local paper for a motorcar received this reply from a Royal Artillery sergeant serving with the B.L.A.:

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chism and Law

Megalopolis to Tyrannopolis, the regeneration of barbarism, creates as its chief offences dissent, sedition and desertion. Justice consists in the interpretation of laws in the light of Law, and European civilisation is rapidly approaching the point at which the conscience of human life and experience, embodied in Law, is irreconcilable with the laws enacted by the State. In Germany, the collapse of judicial institutions occurred with suddenness and finality. In this country it has been delayed solely by the independence of the Courts, which rests and has rested upon the resistance of the public at large, through recalcitrant individuals, to the rise of non-judicial conceptions of Law. It is in this struggle that the case of the Freedom Press is an episode, as significant in the context of events as the case of *R. vs. Wilkes*, for in it, and in similar cases, the judiciary is facing the issue of its status in future English society.

The Courts must decide, in this and in future prosecutions, whether they will maintain the legislature or the Law, whether they will maintain the independent status which they have so far maintained—and which in the persons of the Judges they continue to maintain—or whether they will submit to become executive in function. No historical process is inevitable. Because we are involved in a continental landslide into barbarism and military dictatorship, we need not resign ourselves. If the public, in the persons of political recalcitrants, will maintain the Law, if the Courts will maintain it, English traditions are strong enough in freedom and Law to resist the threat of political police and of licensed printing, of conscription and suppression, but the Courts and the people, realising their common danger, must maintain each other.

We have no constitution which the judicature can employ to restrain the legislature. They can restrain it only by their decisions, based upon the mass of legal tradition and the support of the people at large. The legal fiction whereby the Crown is the repository of justice, the ultimate judge whom the Judges represent, has been maintained and protected from abuse by the fact that where the Crown and its Judges have been in conflict, and the people have upheld the Judges, the political power of the judicature has been sufficient to safeguard its independence. The legislative voice which now speaks in the name of the Crown is no longer a judicial voice—it is the voice of political adventurers controlling a megalopolitan military state. The voice of the Defence Regulations is nominally the voice of the Crown—it is practically the voice of an irresponsible political caucus which has not even undergone the formality of popular

upon the original principle of all jurisprudence—that the individual human being has, by virtue of his existence and his manhood, rights which are inalienable and responsibilities which cannot be delegated. The conception of natural law, upon which, according to Blackstone, jurisprudence is founded, is in its essence an Anarchist conception. The conception of common law, the existence of a body of custom recognised by common consent and common conscience to be in accordance with human rights and human duties, is an Anarchist conception. The recognition of the responsibility which a human being bears for all those actions which influence the lives and affect the fortunes of other men is the starting-point of Anarchist ethics. The conflict between Anarchism and law which has arisen in this case, and which will continue to arise in a more and more exacerbated form, is due not to the irresponsibility of Anarchists but to the corruption of the universal ideas of equity by irresponsible statute-making. Where Anarchists come into conflict with the legal system, it is not because they are opposed to the conception of law, but because the system of law with which they are in conflict is at variance with human conscience. There are in existence to-day two conflicting systems of law, one which represents the body of human will and experience, and another which exists solely to maintain the authority of the State against that will and against that experience. The public at large is aware of the discrepancy. Let a London crowd see the police chasing a thief, and they will collar the thief, not because they are fulfilling a common-law duty but because the prevention and prohibition of theft are products of normal human will and experience. Let them see an escort chasing a deserter, and they will trip the redcaps. The public shows a more accurate awareness of the powers which law can and cannot arrogate to itself than any of the professional jurists. They do not need to read Blackstone to know that "no laws are binding on the subject that assault the body or violate the conscience". Learned Judges who point out that the multiplicity of wartime regulations tend to bring law and justice into contempt do not carry the distinction to its conclusion. They are aware, but often only very dimly aware, that it is to the maintenance of common-law rights, or, if you prefer it, of human conscience against the State and its encroachments that they owe their right to give judgment in relative political independence. If there had been no Anarchists, they would not be upon the Bench where they now sit. English justice owes more to Wilkes and William Penn than to any legislator or body of legislators.

free societies, but the State and statute law, imposed by a political majority, is not. A Court which upheld the absolute validity of statutes would deliver itself into the hands of the legislature as a purely passive and executive instrument. It would bind itself to accept the natural legality of any act of government from the Parliamentary Bill that provided to boil the Bishop of Rochester's cook in oil to a statute legalising cannibalism. In the submission of the Defence, those Courts which have upheld the right of the State to assault the person and violate the conscience of individual subjects by military conscription, by indefinite interment on security grounds, and by the suppression of free political controversy in any section of the community, uniformed or not, have already committed themselves to uphold most of the apparatus of Fascism and to deny the elementary principles of legal theory. The Courts have no control over the complexion of the Government. If they oblige themselves to uphold it, they have no means of controlling any abuse which it may commit, however extreme its complexion. If a Fascist government is returned by the Electorate, then they will uphold Fascism. If a government, duly elected, outlawed all Jews, then they will uphold anti-Semitism. If such a government abolishes law courts and judges, then they will voluntarily wind themselves up. In the submission of the Defence, courts which have committed themselves in this way forfeit their right to be treated as legitimate sources of precedent. It is not that in the present case judgments upholding Defence Regulations of this kind are distinguishable—they are in the fullest sense illegal. It is difficult to believe that, whatever the political future, the judgment of Atkin, L. J., dissenting from the enforcement of Regulation 18B will not be the accepted precedent in law, if law is to continue to be something other than mere political execution. Mansfield, L. C. J. at least had no doubts about the matter, when he ruled "I care not for the supposed dicta of judges, however eminent, if they be contrary to all principle." The arbitrary use of defence regulations, framed for another object, to ventilate political spite and to suppress political dissidents is contrary to all principle, and if the Courts uphold it, then it is the Courts that will be discredited, not the principle that will be legalised.

Whatever we may feel about the nature and substance of sedition, the employment against it of Regulations 39A at the present stage of the war, and in the present circumstances, can have no conceivable justification. Why were proceedings not instituted against the Freedom Press under sections 1 and 2 of the Incitement to Dis-

APPEAL!

At the moment of writing, three of our anarchist comrades stand convicted by a judge and jury of one crime—and one crime only—that of holding opinions and expressing those opinions in print. At the Old Bailey on Thursday, April 26th, reaction and the farce of legal "justice" were able to enjoy a petty and ignoble triumph. What can we learn from this case? No just that three anarchists have been condemned to spend the next nine months of their lives in prison cells, but that the liberty and dignity of the individual has receded still further from our grasp. What else can we learn? That now, more than ever before, we must exercise an unceasing and uncompromising vigilance in face of the ever more blatant fascist character of the State.

All who endorse and support our present struggle must realize fully that this appeal bears a heavy weight of urgency, for the financial responsibilities of the Defence Committee are now tremendous. Already we have paid out £500 in preliminary legal expenses alone, already we have spent £100 on vital and indispensable propaganda—on leaflets, handbills and posters, on public meetings and office rentals, on stationery and postage. These expenses will be more than doubled in the immediate future, and our sole guarantee that all costs will be met is your solidarity and your concern for the issues at stake.

We have not the limitless resources of the State machine behind us! We cannot draw upon the ample funds of the National Exchequer! We rely solely upon the pennies and the shillings of workers, and we are confident that, if each person who believes sincerely in the importance and urgency of our work will endorse his belief by sending us as much as he is possibly able to afford, we can and will raise the money we need. Already we have received encouraging and inspiring support from many friends not only in this country but in France, in Ireland, in Sweden, in the Middle East, in India, in the U.S.A., from soldiers and airmen, from I.L.P. branches, P.P.U. groups, local Labour Parties, Co-operators and Trade Union branches; we have received messages of solidarity and generous donations to the Fund from the Industrial Workers of the World at Chicago, and from the New York magazine *Why*; we ask you to continue and multiply this support. Get all your friends, all contacts and possible sympathisers, your fellow-workers and local organisations to support the Defence Fund.

If you want official collecting sheets, or handbills giving full details about the Freedom Press Defence Committee, write to us at once at our office—17, St. George Street, Hanover Square, London, W.1. We count upon your solidarity as never before, during the coming days.

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If Anarchism is the recognition of ultimate personal responsibility, then Anarchism is also the origin and quintessence of law, not its opposite. The emphasis of Anarchist thought is

that the public at large is aware of the discrepancy. Let a London crowd see the police chasing a thief, and they will collar the thief, not because they are fulfilling a common-law duty but because the prevention and prohibition of theft are products of normal human will and experience. Let them see an escort chasing a deserter, and they will trip the redcaps. The public shows a more accurate awareness of the powers which law can and cannot arrogate to itself than any of the professional jurists. They do not need to read Blackstone to know that "no laws are binding on the subject that assault the body or violate the conscience". Learned Judges who point out that the multiplicity of wartime regulations tend to bring law and justice into contempt do not carry the distinction to its conclusion. They are aware, but often only very dimly aware, that it is to the maintenance of common-law rights, or, if you prefer it, of human conscience against the State and its encroachments that they owe their right to give judgment in relative political independence. If there had been no Anarchists, they would not be upon the Bench where they now sit. English justice owes more to Wilkes and William Penn than to any legislator or body of legislators.

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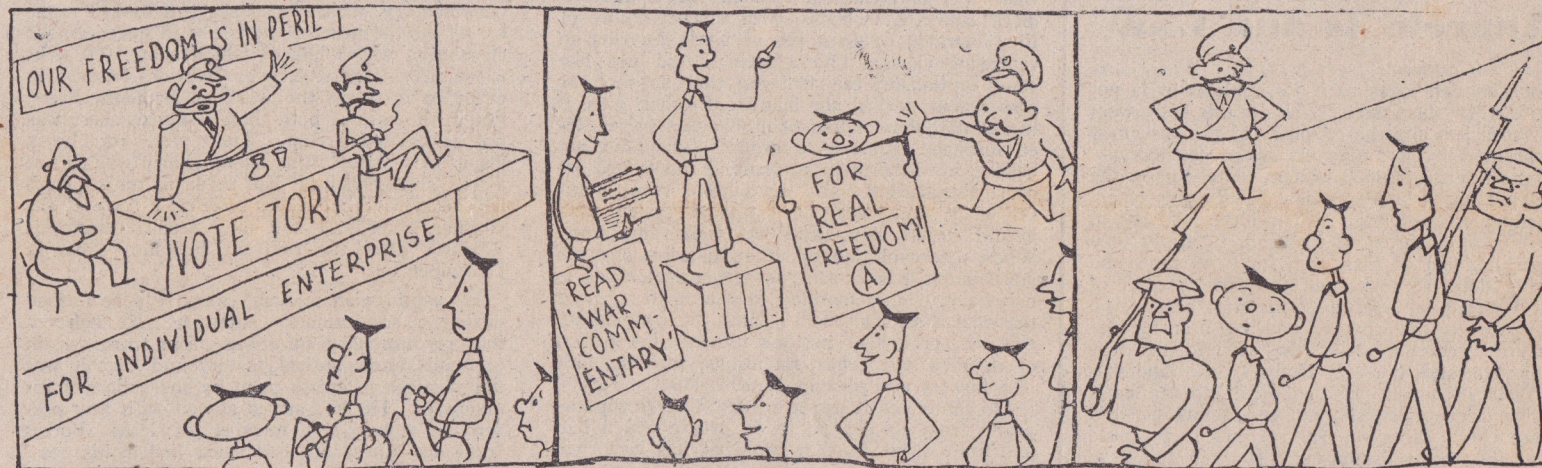
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She died there this week after a fall. She was 87. Verdict: Misadventure.

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Evening Standard, 18/4/45.

Our description of the Liberal Party as having "degenerated into a mere electoral arrangement by which business-men can get into Parliament without the expense of being Tories" (*War Commentary*, 27/1/45) may have been thought harsh by some, but here is a concrete instance. The man did not even know the most elementary fact about the contemporary Liberalism. And all over the country similar people are flocking to become candidates for parties for which they have never worked and of which they know absolutely nothing, Army officers out to solve their personal post-war problems being the worst offenders.

INFORMERS WANTED

Fathers must assist the police to find and arrest sons who have deserted from the Forces, Sir Gervais Rentoul, West London magistrate, told the father of two deserters yesterday.

Walter Hope was sent to prison for one month for helping to conceal his sons, Leonard Hope, a deserter from the Middlesex Regiment since 1941, and Walter Richard Hope, a deserter from the Navy since 1943.

"This is a bad case because you deliberately obstructed the police all the way through," Sir Gervais told Hope.

"There can be no excuse when the police call at a house to make inquiries and are deliberately misled. It is then the duty of every citizen to answer frankly and truthfully."

Sunday Express, 22/4/45.

Why should a father's loyalty be to a policeman rather than his sons? And were we not told that informing was one of the vices of Nazi Germany?

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BRITISH POLITICAL POLICE A

Continued from p. 1

He then turned to an article headed 'The Workers' Struggle in Belgium', and to an article headed 'All Power to the Soviets', in which, he alleged, "here again we get this repeated harping on mutinies which took place in the forces of Germany after the last war, held up, in my submission, in the terms of the article, as examples to be followed."

"If you take all these references together, in our submission they amount to an endeavour to seduce from their duty those in the service of His Majesty and to create disaffection among them likely to lead to breaches of their duty."

The Attorney General repeated that there was a general charge of conspiracy on these counts, three subsidiary charges that in disseminating the paper the accused were endeavouring to cause disaffection, and three charges of possessing the circular letter.

"Fight! What For?"

"There is one document," he added, "which I have not yet put before you. Mr. & Mrs. Richards were charged with having in their possession a document which was found in their house—in their possession or under their control. It is a leaflet entitled 'Fight! What For?' and it says this:

"You are wanted for the Army:
Do you know what you'll have to do?
They will tell you to murder your brothers,
As they have been told to kill you.

"You are wanted for the Army:
Do you know what you'll have to do?
Just murder to save your country
From men who are workers like you.

"Your country! Who says you've a country?
You live in another man's flat:
You haven't even a backyard
Why should you murder for that?

"You haven't a hut or a building,
No flower, no garden, it's true,
The landlords have grabbed all the country,
Let them do the fighting, not you."

Soldiers' Duties Not Affected

The evidence which was produced did not differ substantially from that produced by the prosecution at the Police Court proceedings, of which accounts have appeared in *War Commentary*, except that the two pamphlets, *The Wilhelmshaven Revolt* and *The Kronstadt Revolt* were cited as evidence of an endeavour to cause disaffection. The soldiers who gave evidence stated unanimously that their duties as soldiers had been affected in no way by what they had read in *War Commentary* or anything

WHO ORDERED THE TRIAL?

One of the most important questions that arises from the trial of the four anarchists is, Who ordered this monstrous and unjust prosecution? The fact that it was conducted by the Attorney-General in person, shows that it was no ordinary routine case. Obviously someone in high authority regarded it as a test case of the first importance, and throughout the hearing there appeared hints at action taken at the instance of orders from above. During the whole four days, the privileged benches were crowded with mysterious representatives, high military officers, etc. A further significant fact was the inspection of identity cards. When it became obvious that the anarchists could command a considerable

body of popular support, as was apparent by the number of people in the court and the crowds trying to get into it. This inspection may have been started by Inspector Whitehead as his own idea, to complete his files or frighten away a few of the people who laughed during his cross examination. On the other hand it may equally well have been ordered by some of the mysterious people from higher-up whose influence was so manifest throughout the trial.

Who started the prosecution? Who was so anxious to find out who was there, and to listen, through the ears of informers, to the opinions of the public? Surely there is no conceivable reason why this should be con-

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The Defence was commenced by John Maude, K.C., who appeared for Vernon Richards and John Hewetson. He spoke exhaustively for more than three hours and analysed line by line the documents on which the prosecution based their case.

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Turning to *War Commentary*, he said that it was a paper in which the material was carefully written. It was not a paper filled with wild and ill-thought-out muck, and the first article to which attention had been drawn was an extremely careful and not ill-written piece of work. He contended that it was a historical document, and

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Do you know what you'll have to do?
They will tell you to murder your brothers,
As they have been told to kill you.

"You are wanted for the Army:
Do you know what you'll have to do?
Just murder to save your country
From men who are workers like you.

"Your country! Who says you've a country?
You live in another man's flat:
You haven't even a backyard
Why should you murder for that?

"You haven't a hut or a building,
No flower, no garden, it's true,
The landlords have grabbed all the country,
Let them do the fighting, not you."

Soldiers' Duties Not Affected

The evidence which was produced did not differ substantially from that produced by the prosecution at the Police Court proceedings, of which accounts have appeared in *War Commentary*, except that the two pamphlets, *The Wilhelmshaven Revolt* and the *Kronstadt Revolt* were cited as evidence of an endeavour to cause disaffection. The soldiers who gave evidence stated unanimously that their duties as soldiers had been affected in no way by what they had read in *War Commentary* or anything else received from Freedom Press.

Anarchists and Law

(Continued from p. 3)

gerous enough measure if its application is not restricted by the Courts? Under this act a warrant sufficient for the purposes of the case may be granted by a Judge on sworn testimony—yet the Special Branch prefers to rely upon the powers granted by Parliament for the sole object of suppressing foreign fifth-column activity in the fact of a threat of invasion, to apply to a Superintendent of their own for a warrant, and having done so to exceed the powers even of that warrant by seizure of material bearing no relevance to the charge, and by uttering defamatory remarks about the accused to their employers, and, it seems likely, to the landlords of their premises. It is difficult to see what further impropriety, short of conducting the trial before Mr. Morrison in person, they could reasonably have committed. If they failed to apply to a Justice for warrants, is it unreasonable to assume that they did so knowing full well that no Justice would grant them on the evidence at their disposal? It is not only the liberty of the accused which is jeopardised by such proceedings, but the independence of the Judges. The whole performance is an insult to the judicature as a whole.

And what is "disaffection"? The statutory discussion of duty to His Majesty is as irrelevant as the argument about villeinage which Lord Mansfield rejected—the loyalty of soldiers to His Majesty is not in question. The rights which the prosecution is attempting to claim are these—that the Government should have the power to impose compulsory service on any section of the community, and, having done so, demand from them obedience to any orders however criminal or improper—and further to render the discussion of such orders, or the dissemination of any political opinion hostile to their givers, a penal offence. That is the sum of the prosecution's demands. Their zeal for unquestioning obedience in their own military

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He would wish soldiers' councils to be formed during a revolutionary situation. He believed that revolutionary situations arose from certain economic and political factors and that it was not possible to create them by the action of individuals. He had never agreed with any person to seduce any member of H.M. Forces from his duties, and had never had in his possession any documents with the intention of causing disaffection. The list of soldiers referred to by the prosecution had been prepared by ordinary office routine from the names of soldiers who wrote sending subscriptions for *War Commentary*.

Anarchist Com

WHO ARE THE BACKWARD RACES?

One of the excuses put forward by imperialists for their rule is the fact that the dominated races are "backward". They are certainly so economically; the imperialists see to that, and

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It had never been his desire to subvert any soldier. He stated that the function of a soldiers' council would be to organise the work necessary in a revolutionary situation. A revolutionary situation occurred when the central authority had completely broken down. The social revolution was inevitable. The social revolution was a condition of society free from external authority in which men act voluntarily without coercive institutions. Organisation would be based on mutual agreement rather than on institutions such as police, etc. All constituted authority would disappear. Such institutions as hospitals would still have to be organised, but all necessary arrangements of this nature would be made by local groups.

Derek Curtis Bennett, K.C., who appeared on behalf of Marie Louise Richards, submitted that the prosecution had wholly and completely failed to prove any of the counts in the indictment. It had not been proved that she conspired with anybody to cause disaffection or that she was at any time in legal possession of any of the documents cited. Marie Louise Richards had no desire at all to slide out of the case on the back of her co-defendants. She was an anarchist; there was no need to make any apology or explanation for the fact. He reiterated the argument adopted by John Maude and submitted that none of the documents were capable of the construction placed upon them by the Attorney-General.

A Political Trial

James Burge, who appeared on behalf of Philip Sansom, said that, whatever the Attorney-General may have said, the Jury might well think this trial was a political trial and nothing

THE PRESS

A reader of the *Daily Sketch* posed a simple question to its feature-columnist "Candidus" (20/4/45) asking how, if Conservatives claimed to believe in personal liberty, they reconciled this with a belief in peace-time conscription "Candidus" got all hot and bothered at this question and said it was a statement easy to

able to assume that they are knowing full well that no Justice would grant them on the evidence at their disposal? It is not only the liberty of the accused which is jeopardised by such proceedings, but the independence of the Judges. The whole performance is an insult to the judicature as a whole.

And what is "disaffection"? The statutory discussion of duty to His Majesty is as irrelevant as the argument about villeinage which Lord Mansfield rejected—the loyalty of soldiers to His Majesty is not in question. The rights which the prosecution is attempting to claim are these—that the Government should have the power to impose compulsory service on any section of the community, and, having done so, demand from them obedience to any orders however criminal or improper—and further to render the discussion of such orders, or the dissemination of any political opinion hostile to their givers, a penal offence. That is the sum of the prosecution's demands. Their zeal for unquestioning obedience in their own military forces is only equalled by their indignation at the obedience of German troops when their government ordered them to commit atrocities. The German people are responsible as a whole—if they obey, they are to be treated as criminals: but English troops must not even discuss their instructions—the government which commands them is above such criticism. It would never commit an atrocity. The impudence of this claim is almost equal to its illegality. It has been ruled that anyone may censure the conduct of servants of the Crown provided that he does so without malignity. There is no exception to excluding civilians placed compulsorily in uniform. In the modern political State the conception of unquestioning obedience to the Crown is an anachronism. To uphold it in the context of the Sedition Acts is to disenfranchise all soldiers, to abolish their state of citizenship for as long as they are in the army. We contest the right of Sir James Grigg to accept the duty of these men to sacrifice their lives, their homes and their liberty, while rejecting their right of free access to all political ideas and all political activities. We contest an interpretation which will mean that for an historian to describe the execution of King Charles I is tantamount to incitement to treason. The object of this prosecution is to restrict the expression of political opinions unfavourable to the Government, and to the Minister of War in person, both by and to something like twenty per cent. of the electorate. It can have no other object. The claim that any opinions, however malignant, which the four accused anarchists might circulate among troops, could at this stage influence the course of the war to the detriment of the Allies is too puerile to require a reply.

We did not seek out this conflict, but neither will we shirk it. Let there be no mistake about it—it is not the victims of this prosecution but its sponsors who stand convicted. It is we who are the accusers. If accusations of treason are to be made—and the charges which have been brought by the Attorney-General are in substance accusations of treason—we have our own charges to bring. Charges of disaffection come

the witness box and they were affected in no way whatsoever.

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ALEX COMFORT.

RALLY TO THE DEFENCE
of the Three Jailed Anarchists at the
following meetings on

SUNDAY, 6th MAY

—:—
ANARCHIST FEDERATION
GLASGOW GROUP:

Brunswick Street, 3 to 11 p.m.

PAISLEY GROUP:

Gaol Square, 7 p.m.

BURNBANK GROUP:

(See local announcements)

Speakers:

EDDIE SHAW	JAS. RAESIDE
ROGER CARR	FRANK LEECH
DENIS McGLYNN	JAS. DICK
JOE BROWN	SAM LAWSON
BOBBY LYNN	WM. REID
JOHN CARRACHER	
EDDIE FENWICK	
and others.	

Anarchist Com

WHO ARE THE BACKWARD RACES?

One of the excuses put forward by imperialists for their rule is the fact that the dominated races are "backward". They are certainly so economically; the imperialists see to that, and do their best to keep them backward culturally. Nevertheless, amongst the exploited colonial workers and peasants the voice of freedom is heard.

It even penetrated the august precincts of the World Trade Union Conference, as George Padmore illustrates (in *Forward*, 14/4/45). The representatives of the trade unions on colonial territory alone gave voice to militant demands of international solidarity. Whereas all the other representatives of the world's workers tamely fell into line and spoke their little pieces, just as the governments that offered them transport facilities to attend required them to do, these representatives from Jamaica, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, used the opportunity for calling attention to imperialist exploitation, and urged the ghastly conditions of colonial workers on the Conference. Needless to say, their speeches received no publicity.

One may mention also that (as mentioned in the last issue of *War Commentary*) George Padmore brought greetings of solidarity from the Sierra Leone T.U.C. to the Protest Meeting in defence of Freedom Press at the Holborn Hall, 15/4/45. Such an action goes far beyond what one could imagine of the British T.U.C.

It is greatly to be hoped that the militancy of the colonial workers, reflected in the actions of the trade union representatives at the London Conference, will result in their attacking the social problem with a vigour that cannot be expressed in terms of European and American trade unionism; and that an economic organisation expressing their needs more closely than one based on reformism under capitalism, will arise amongst them. Such a movement undoubtedly will recognise that its international affiliation is not due to a Trade Union International that is subservient to Imperialism, but to a body such as the I.W.M.A. which is opposed to Imperialism.

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This is typical of the propaganda churned out by the "popular press" under the Tory Press Lords. They emphasise the fact that they do not believe in "controls: what they do not over-stress is the fact that what they mean to say is that they oppose controls for the businessman. Let him carry on making money. They are not concerned with the individual, not concerned with the workers. The Beaverbrook section also pretend not to be concerned with the monopolists, but we can take this with a pinch of salt—all reactionary demagogues can afford to blow off against the major industrialists, who can take care of themselves, and who know their

NORTH LONDON FREEDOM DISCUSSION GROUP

Next meeting Tuesday, 8th May

"THE EVOLUTION OF THE BRAIN"

Speaker: John Humphrey.

ADULT SCHOOL, Palmers Road,
(opp. Arnos Grove Tube Station)

"War Commentary" readers and
friends are cordially invited.

POLITICAL POLICE AT WORK

WHO ORDERED THE TRIAL?

One of the most important questions that arises from the trial of the four anarchists is, Who ordered this monstrous and unjust prosecution? The fact that it was conducted by the Attorney-General in person, shows that it was no ordinary routine case. Obviously someone in high authority regarded it as a test case of the first importance, and throughout the hearing there appeared hints at action taken at the instance of orders from above. During the whole four days, the privileged benches were crowded with mysterious representatives, high military officers, etc. A further significant fact was the inspection of identity cards. When it became obvious that the anarchists could command a considerable

body of popular support, as was apparent by the number of people in the court and the crowds trying to get into it. This inspection may have been started by Inspector Whitehead as his own idea, to complete his files or frighten away a few of the people who laughed during his cross examination. On the other hand it may equally well have been ordered by some of the mysterious people from higher-up whose influence was so manifest throughout the trial.

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revolution was a condition of society free from but a political trial. If justice were to be vindicated it was necessary for the jury to view the case away from all political feelings and prejudices. They should beware of being influenced by a war atmosphere. Their business was only concerned with evidence, and he submitted that on the evidence which existed the prosecution had not discharged its onus of proof. It was no part of his duty to withdraw or apologise on behalf of Sansom for anything written in the publications of Freedom Press, since he held that the meanings placed upon the articles by the prosecution were wrong and fantastic. It was easy to tear phrases from their contexts in articles and pin them together and then say that the cumulative effect was incitement. Opposition to Governments was legal and it was absurd to try and control or dictate to the people in the Forces what they should think or what they should read.

Prison for Idealists

The Judge directed that Sansom should be acquitted on the charges of disseminating *War Commentary*. In his summing up he devoted a considerable time to the points raised by the prosecution and a comparatively short time to the points raised by the defence. The jury after being away over two hours returned a verdict of not guilty in the case of Marie Louise Richards, and guilty in the cases of Vernon Richards, John Hewetson and Philip Sansom. The Judge remarked that he realised they were idealists, and sentenced them to nine months' imprisonment each.

A sinister aspect of the trial was the presence of large numbers of Special Branch officers, as well as a number of known informers who mingled with the crowds of supporters who sat on the public benches and waited outside the court. On the third day, the Special Branch detectives ordered an inspection of the identity cards of the public, on mysterious orders from a higher authority. The inspection was directed by Inspectors Whitehead and Hoare, who gave evidence for the prosecution. This represents a direct and insolent interference on the part of the prosecuting authorities with the right of free access to courts which has always been held to be attached to the practice of 'law' in this country.

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Founded War Commentary

Vernon Richards, appearing in the witness box, said that he was of Italian parentage. His father had been imprisoned for five years on the penal islands under the dictatorship of Crispi. He himself had been deported from France because he was suspected of associating with anti-Fascist Italians. He was associated with a publication called *Free Italy* during 1936, and during that year founded *Spain and the World*. In 1939, with some friends, he founded *War Commentary*, which has since run to 113 numbers. At the time of the issues in question, the circulation was 5,000, of which about 100 went to soldiers. He took over Express Printers in order to facilitate the work of Freedom Press, but in the case of both these concerns there was not actual ownership. They were run by a group of people. *War Commentary* was run at a loss, and he himself had made no money from his work. He had never received a copy of the circular letter and had only seen it from his Solicitor after the raid on Freedom Press in December last.

He would wish soldiers' councils to be formed during a revolutionary situation. He believed that revolutionary situations arose from certain economic and political factors and that it was not possible to create them by the action of individuals. He had never agreed with any person to seduce any member of H.M. Forces from his duties, and had never had in his possession any documents with the intention of causing disaffection. The list of soldiers referred to by the prosecution had been prepared by ordinary office routine from the names of soldiers who wrote sending subscriptions for *War Commentary*.

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John Hewetson said that he had never been a member of a political party, and had no sympathy with any political party. He had been in prison for a week in 1940 for refusing to pay a fine of £1 for selling papers. He had been offered a commission in the R.A.M.C., but had refused it on principle, as a political conscientious objector. He had no monetary interest in the concern, and made his living by working in a hospital. His views were similar to those of Richards.

The Social Revolution Inevitable

It had never been his desire to subvert any soldier. He stated that the function of a soldiers' council would be to organise the work necessary in a revolutionary situation. A revolutionary situation occurred when the central authority had completely broken down. The social revolution was inevitable. The social revolution was a condition of society free from external authority in which men act voluntarily, without coercive institutions. Organisation would be based on mutual agreement rather than on institutions such as police, etc. All constituted authority would disappear. Such institutions as hospitals would still have to be organised, but all necessary arrangements of this nature would be made by local groups.

Derek Curtis Bennett, K.C., who appeared on behalf of Marie Louise Richards, submitted that the prosecution had wholly and completely failed to prove any of the counts in the indictment. It had not been proved that she conspired with anybody to cause disaffection or that she was at any time in legal possession of any of the documents cited. Marie Louise Richards had no desire at all to slide out of the case on the backs of her co-defendants. She was an anarchist; there was no need to make any apology or explanation for the fact. He reiterated the argument adopted by John Maude and submitted that none of the documents were capable of the construction placed upon them by the Attorney-General.

A Political Trial

James Burge, who appeared on behalf of Philip Sansom, said that, whatever the Attorney General may have said, the Jury might well think this trial was a political trial and nothing

not guilty in the case of Marie Louise Richards, and guilty in the cases of Vernon Richards, John Hewetson and Philip Sansom. The Judge remarked that he realised they were idealists, and sentenced them to nine months' imprisonment each.

A sinister aspect of the trial was the presence of large numbers of Special Branch officers, as well as a number of known informers who mingled with the crowds of supporters who sat on the public benches and waited outside the court. On the third day, the Special Branch detectives ordered an inspection of the identity cards of the public, on mysterious orders from a higher authority. The inspection was directed by Inspectors Whitehead and Hoare, who gave evidence for the prosecution. This represents a direct and insolent interference on the part of the prosecuting authorities with the right of free access to courts which has always been held to be attached to the practice of 'law' in this country.

Bristol Defence Committee

On Monday, April 9th, at a meeting called by a group of comrades in Bristol, who view with grave concern the recent attacks upon the principles of freedom of opinion and the freedom of the Press by the police in raiding the Freedom Press offices and arresting our four London anarchist comrades, it was decided to form a local Freedom Press Defence Committee. Subscribing to the three main objectives of the London Freedom Press Defence Committee, the meeting agreed to elect Tommy Hart as Chairman, Tom Carlile, as Secretary and W. Chris Lewis as Treasurer, to act on the Committee together with a representative from each affiliated organisation.

To date, the local groups of the I.L.P. and the P.P.U. (Central Group) have appointed delegates to the Committee, and the local Common Wealth branch, also the N.C.L., have intimated their support and are being invited to appoint delegates. We appeal to all local comrades and organisations to support us in our fight. All communications c/o Freedom Bookshop, Cheltenham Road, Bristol.

Anarchist Commentary

WHO ARE THE BACKWARD RACES?

One of the excuses put forward by imperialists for their rule is the fact that the dominated races are "backward". They are certainly so economically; the imperialists see to that, and do their best to keep them backward culturally. Nevertheless, amongst the exploited colonial

THE PRESS

A reader of the *Daily Sketch* posed a simple question to its feature-columnist "Candidus" (20/4/45) asking how, if Conservatives claimed to believe in personal liberty, they reconciled this with a belief in peace-time conscription. "Candidus" got all hot and bothered at this question and said it was a statement easy to make and hard to confute; that in fact Conservatives had expressed no opinion either for or against peace-time conscription, and neither had

puppets will never seriously challenge them. The "small" capitalist however has to be bought over by promises. Hence this agitation. It is obviously not agitation against State control as such (otherwise it would be absurd to support conscription); it is opposition to State control (which they believe in) infringing capitalist control (which they also believe in). They do not mind it infringing the rest of society.

That is why there is such an obvious distinction between the Conservative who "sponsored"

ected in no way whatsoever.

People In Arms

With regard to the article on People in Arms, he said that there appeared to be objection only

ill from renegades and placemen. Charges of corrupting the morale of the Army come ill from Ministers who have done more than any Anarchist could hope to do to shake the faith of the Army in the cause for which it accepted service. It is we, through the persecution of our four comrades, who will take the duty of accusation upon our shoulders. We will accuse the accusers: we will accuse them on behalf of the peoples of the entire world, whose confidence they have betrayed and whose lives and liberties they have wantonly destroyed. We will accuse them on behalf of the German Democrats, whose tormentors they entertained as guests. We will accuse them on behalf of the people of Spain, whose cause they calumniated and whose subjection they financed and sponsored. We will accuse them on behalf of the people of India, whose rights they have suppressed by violence and starvation, and whose country they have converted into a prison. We will accuse them on behalf of the citizens of Turin, of Calais, of Hamburg, of Tokio, of Berlin, whose cities they burned and whose children they massacred: on behalf of the millions whom their fraudulent war has destroyed and the thousands that it will still destroy: by every falsehood they have told, by every liar they have suborned, by every progressive idea that they have stifled and betrayed and every instrument of tyranny that they have supported and advocated: by their fictitious Atlantic Charter, which they now own as a canard: by every drop of blood, and sweat, and tears we will indict them as traitors to the very conceptions of human liberty and Law which they have had the impudence to assume.

ALEX COMFORT.

RALLY TO THE DEFENCE

of the Three Jailed Anarchists at the following meetings on

SUNDAY, 6th MAY

ANARCHIST FEDERATION GLASGOW GROUP:

Brunswick Street, 3 to 11 p.m.

PAISLEY GROUP:

Gaol Square, 7 p.m.

BURNBANK GROUP:

(See local announcements)

Speakers:

EDDIE SHAW JAS. RAESIDE
ROGER CARR FRANK LEECH
DENIS MCGLYNN JAS. DICK
JOE BROWN SAM LAWSON
BOBBY LYNN WM. REID
JOHN CARRACHER
EDDIE FENWICK
and others.

ferred to by the prosecution was the names of soldiers who wrote sending subscriptions for *War Commentary*.

Anarchist Commentary

WHO ARE THE BACKWARD RACES?

One of the excuses put forward by imperialists for their rule is the fact that the dominated races are "backward". They are certainly so economically; the imperialists see to that, and do their best to keep them backward culturally. Nevertheless, amongst the exploited colonial workers and peasants the voice of freedom is heard.

It even penetrated the august precincts of the World Trade Union Conference, as George Padmore illustrates (in *Forward*, 14/4/45). The representatives of the trade unions on colonial territory alone gave voice to militant demands of international solidarity. Whereas all the other representatives of the world's workers tamely fell into line and spoke their little pieces, just as the governments that offered them transport facilities to attend required them to do, these representatives from Jamaica, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, used the opportunity for calling attention to imperialist exploitation, and urged the ghastly conditions of colonial workers on the Conference. Needless to say, their speeches received no publicity.

One may mention also that (as mentioned in the last issue of *War Commentary*) George Padmore brought greetings of solidarity from the Sierra Leone T.U.C. to the Protest Meeting in defence of Freedom Press at the Holborn Hall, 15/4/45. Such an action goes far beyond what one could imagine of the British T.U.C.

It is greatly to be hoped that the militancy of the colonial workers, reflected in the actions of the trade union representatives at the London Conference, will result in their attacking the social problem with a vigour that cannot be expressed in terms of European and American trade unionism; and that an economic organisation expressing their needs more closely than one based on reformism under capitalism, will arise amongst them. Such a movement undoubtedly will recognise that its international affiliation is not due to a Trade Union International that is subservient to Imperialism, but to a body such as the I.W.M.A. which is opposed to Imperialism.

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THE PRESS

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This is typical of the propaganda churned out by the "popular press", under the Tory Press Lords. They emphasise the fact that they do not believe in "controls: what they do not over-stress is the fact that what they mean to say is that they oppose controls for the businessman. Let him carry on making money. They are not concerned with the individual, not concerned with the workers. The Beaverbrook section also pretend not to be concerned with the monopolists, but we can take this with a pinch of salt—all reactionary demagogues can afford to blow off against the major industrialists, who can take care of themselves, and who know their

comrades and organisations to support us in our fight. All communications c/o Freedom Bookshop, Cheltenham Road, Bristol.

puppets will never seriously challenge them. The "small" capitalist however has to be bought over by promises. Hence this agitation. It is obviously not agitation against State control as such (otherwise it would be absurd to support conscription): it is opposition to State control (which they believe in) infringing capitalist control (which they also believe in). They do not mind it infringing the rest of society.

That is why there is such an obvious distinction between the Conservative who "opposes" to a limited extent State control, the Socialist who "opposes" to an equal extent capitalist control, and the revolutionary who opposes both State and capitalist control. This would hardly need to be said to people of intelligence, but we mention the trite fact because Low in his cartoon in the *Evening Standard* (20/4/45) confuses the issue in an absurd way, showing Beaverbrook leading an attempt to "undermine" Bevin under the slogan "No Controls", assisted by Colonel Blimp dressed as a Bevin Boy, with the motto on his pick "Up the Anarchists".

Let us make it plain, in case a copy of this paper falls into the hands of anyone so lacking in resource that they have to make a living by writing for the Press Lords, when there are comparatively honest jobs available like safe-breaking, that in fact Anarchists recognise that everything must be controlled by someone. We say that the workers in each industry should control each industry; that the people as a whole should manage their own affairs; hence we oppose State and capitalist control, and control by any group of people over any other people, recognising only the control over things by men.

NORTH LONDON FREEDOM DISCUSSION GROUP

Next meeting Tuesday, 8th May

"THE EVOLUTION OF THE BRAIN"

Speaker: John Humphrey.

ADULT SCHOOL, Palmers Road,
(opp. Arnos Grove Tube Station)

"War Commentary" readers and
friends are cordially invited.

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